



BOARD highlights

A QUICK LOOK AT THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS OF PUTNAM CITY SCHOOLS

Jan. 7, 2019

Board Hears Child Nutrition Report

District students are receiving more school meals this year than in the past, Dwane Drake, Sodexo’s director of Child Nutrition for Putnam City, told board members on Monday night.

Drake told board members that last school year the district served about 1 million breakfasts, 2.1 million lunches and 24,000 dinners, all total nearly 3.3 million meals a year. That’s a 3.5 percent increase in meals served, he said.

Drake said the district this year is continuing its participation in what is known as “Community Eligibility Provision” (CEP). Through CEP, schools may offer meals at no charge to all students. Whether a school is a CEP school depends on information provided by federal assistance programs regarding family use of the programs. Last year 14 district schools were considered to be CEP schools. This year, the number is 16. According to Drake, CEP schools this year are:

- Apollo Elementary
- Arbor Grove Elementary
- Central Elementary
- Coronado Heights Elementary
- Hilldale Elementary
- Kirkland Elementary
- Overholser Elementary
- Tulakes Elementary
- Western Oaks Elementary
- Wiley Post Elementary
- Windsor Hills Elementary
- Capps Middle School
- Cooper Middle School
- Mayfield Middle School
- Western Oaks Middle School
- Putnam City Academy

Last year the 24,000-plus dinners served in the district went to students at Hilldale Elementary, Arbor Grove Elementary, Windsor Hills Elementary and Western Oaks Elementary. Drake said he expects the number of dinners served this year to be about 16,000 higher due to Central Elementary and Tulakes Elementary students being added to the program.

Drake also told board members about two new initiatives, Taste4 menus in high schools and the SoHappy app for parents and students.

Taste4, in place at Putnam City North and Putnam City High and coming to Putnam City West after spring break, uses information from focus groups of students across the country to develop a variety of fresh, flavorful menus and faster checkout lines.

SoHappy is an app developed by Sodexo that can be used to check menus for any district school. In addition to foods offered, the app allows access to all nutritional and allergen information for each menu item. Menus are also on the district website.

Coming up this spring, Drake said, is the annual Future Chefs contest for elementary students as well as implementation of a coffee bar at Putnam City North.

COMMENTS by Public and Board Members

Jay Sherrill wished everyone a Happy New Year and said he was excited about 2019. He also said that over the Christmas break he became aware of the exceptional growth in his children’s skills, knowledge and abilities since school began in August. He said the growth was a tribute to everyone in the room, and he thanked them for their service.

Cindy Gibbs said it was good to see teachers and staff back at schools today.

Gail LoPresto said she enjoyed seeing holiday programs in December, including performances by the Western Oaks Middle School orchestra, Putnam City High’s choir, the Mayfield Middle School band, the Arbor Grove Elementary orchestra and all the Putnam City West students who were part of Yuletide. She also said she heard a wonderful singer at her church on Christmas Eve, and was proud to learn that it was a former Putnam City West student, Kasey Yeargain.

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Meeting Date: Monday, Jan. 7, 5 p.m.
 Location: Administration Building
 Roll Call: All five members of the board were present: Becky Gooch, president; Gail LoPresto, vice president; Cindy Gibbs, Jay Sherrill and Bill Wetmore. Also present were Dr. Fred Rhodes, superintendent; and Tina Losawyer, deputy board clerk.
 Next Meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 22, 5 p.m.

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** by Dr. Fred Rhodes

▶ Valencia Herrero of Putnam City High School is one of 74 Oklahoma high school students named by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister to her 2019 Student Advisory Council. The students assist Hofmeister and the Oklahoma State Department of Education in matters of policy. "These are among Oklahoma's best and brightest high school leaders, and we look forward to learning more about the student perspective on matters of school policy," Hofmeister said.

▶ The third annual Men's Day of Singing in the district will be Tuesday, Jan. 29. Men from all district high schools and middle schools will come together to spend the morning rehearsing with guest clinician Tony Gonzalez from Oklahoma City University. At noon, the public is invited to an informal concert performance in the district's administration building at 5401 N.W. 40th.

▶ In mid-December four Putnam City elementary schools sent their teams of ballroom dancers to take part in the metro area's Life Change Ballroom Competition at Rose State College. Congratulations to students from James L. Dennis, Lake Park, Tulakes and Will Rogers for making the finals, but special congratulations go to Tulakes for earning second place and Will Rogers for finishing in fourth place.

▶ It is always amazing to see the incredible community support we have for Putnam City schools. Last month, the Someday Soon Foundation donated \$10,000 to our Child Nutrition Department to pay for unpaid balances of student meal accounts. The founder of the Foundation, Tommy Kelly, a district supporter who was once a student in the district, knows that some families are unable to make meal payments. We appreciate the Someday Soon Foundation and their philanthropic efforts to make our district an even better place for families in need.

▶ The 5 p.m. newscast on KFOR-TV today featured a segment of Galen Culver's "Is This a Great State or What?" on Putnam City history and the Putnam City Museum. If you didn't get to see it – which you didn't if you are attending this meeting – it should air again Tuesday during KFOR's morning and noon newscasts on and Sunday during morning news. We appreciate Mike Brake for connecting Culver to the story and are pleased to see district history and the district museum receive this coverage.

▶ January is School Board Appreciation Month. Putnam City is blessed to have such loyal and dedicated board members. We appreciate them so much for their service.

Contract Approved with OneNet

The board on Monday night approved submission of paperwork that will allow the district to apply for e-rate reimbursement and enter into a contract with OneNet for internet connectivity for the 2019-2020 school year. The board action will enable the district to enter into contract with OneNet for the first of five one-year optional renewals for Internet services. OneNet submitted the low bid of \$6,075 a month for a 10 GB connection with an initial \$1,000 establishment fee. The cost of the services will be covered by the district's General Fund.

E-rate is the discount that schools may receive for the acquisition of telecommunication services as a result of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The level of discount, between 20 and 90 percent, is based upon the district's level of eligibility in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program.

Board Comments (continued from page 1)

Becky Gooch thanked Dwane Drake and expressed appreciation of the district's partnership with Sodexo. She also thanked district educators who are already part of the #oklaed chats on Twitter each Sunday at 8 p.m., and encouraged more teachers and administrators to take part. She described the chats as wonderful opportunities to chat with state leaders and other educators, and said it was a great chance for state leaders to hear from district educators.

Board Highlights is not a comprehensive review of every item that takes place at board of education meetings. Its purpose is merely to provide information about items that seem of most interest to district employees and patrons. Complete board meeting minutes may be found at <http://www.putnamcityschools.org/BoardofEducation/BoardMeetingMinutes/tabid/565/Default.aspx>

Board Hears Updated on College Readiness

The performance of district students on the ACT continues to show areas of improvement, Executive Director of Secondary Education Rick Croslin told board members Monday night. Croslin shared data points with the board, including:

- The number of students taking the ACT continues to increase, from 779 students in 2014 to 1,164 students in 2018. The 2018 number is a record high number for the district. Typically when school districts or states increase the number of students taking the ACT, composite scores go down. The district's composite score went up.
- The district's overall ACT average increased by .3 while the state's average dropped by .1.
- District students taking four years of English and three years of math and science, and taking the ACT again as a senior, have a composite score of 20.0, which is above the state composite of 19.3.
- Putnam City North's 19.4 composite score is the highest in the district and slightly better than the state's 19.3 average.
- District African-American, Hispanic and Caucasian students are achieving at the state composite score level for those ethnic groups.

Croslin told board members that for three years all district sophomores have taken the pre-ACT and then used review days to understand their results in each area. Students may also later use results to help decide what classes to take. Juniors have been taking the ACT each year in the past four years. One of the district's goals, Croslin said, is for those students to take the exam again in the seniors to improve their composite score.

Putnam City High School Principal Brett Bradley talked with board members about strategies at his school for helping students score well on the ACT. The school schedules an ACT day so that all students can take sections of ACT practice tests in their core classes, followed by reviews to let them know exactly how they did on each section and what they can do to better their scores. All juniors at Putnam City High go through an ACT "boot camp" the week before they take the test in the spring. Another ACT boot camp is available before October ACT testing. In addition, for students who have targeted certain colleges that require high ACT scores, tutoring is available for students scoring 26 or above who wish to increase their scores.

Croslin told board members that the district is increasing high school students' exposure to college. Putnam City West freshmen visited three state universities in the fall, and Putnam City High freshmen will be able to visit a handful of state universities in the spring. College and career fairs were held in the fall at each high school for all juniors and seniors in the school. In addition, concurrent college courses are held at Putnam City North and conversations have started for developing similar offerings at Putnam City High and Putnam City West.

Croslin Reports on Dropout Rate

The district dropout rate for 2017-2018 school year remains better than the state average, Executive Director of Secondary Education Rick Croslin told board members Monday night.

Middle school and high school students who were enrolled in district schools last year but are not in district schools this year are considered dropouts unless the district or the state can determine they are students elsewhere.

For instance, students may move with their families to another state or even to another country without properly withdrawing. If it can't be proven they are in school in their new locale – which can be difficult to prove – they are considered dropouts.

For the 2017-2018 school year, the district had a total of 11 dropouts from its five middle schools, three more than during the 2016-2017 school year. However, at the high school level the number of dropouts decreased at every school and therefore decreased substantially overall, from 131 in the 2016-2017 school year to 104 during the 2017-2018 school year.

Four Policies Revised

The board on Monday night approved changes to four district policies.

Policy AM, which is the district's non-discrimination policy, was amended to include sexual orientation and gender identity on the list of reasons the district does not discriminate. The non-discrimination statement now reads:

The District is committed to the policy that no person shall be unlawfully subjected to discrimination in, excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of any educational program, extra-curricular activity, or employment in the District on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, marital or veteran status, or disability.

Policy BM, the district's policy of civil rights and complaint procedures, had language changed regarding designation of compliance officers by the superintendent and specifying the compliance officers in District Regulation BM-R1. Language to protect from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, matching language changes made to Policy AM, was also added.

Policy EH, the district's student conduct policy, was revised in several sections. The changes in language expand the definitions of bullying and harassment to include hazing and also protect from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity

Policy DA, the district's general personnel policy, was changed in the section on resignation and retirement to comply with current Oklahoma law regarding the deadline for teachers to submit resignation or retirement forms. The policy now says that "teachers shall be required to give notice of resignation or retirement no later than 15 days after the first Monday in June or else the teacher will be bound to perform pursuant to a continuing contract."

Board OKs Student Teachers, OTs and PTs

The board on Monday night approved a memorandum of understanding with Southeastern Oklahoma State University for placement of education students for student teaching during the spring 2019 semester. The district agrees to select a highly qualified cooperating teachers with appropriate certification to serve as a mentor teacher and role model for the student teachers.

The board also voted to approve an agreement with the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center to provide a field work experience in a school setting for University of Oklahoma occupational and physical therapy students. The students are mentored by Putnam City occupational and physical therapists during their time in our schools and are supervised by an instructor from the university.

There is no cost to the district resulting from either agreement.

*From the Dec. 13th
Special Board Meeting*

Board Approves Sale of Bonds

In a special meeting on Thursday, Dec. 13, Putnam City's board of education approved the sale of \$22.75 million in general obligation combined purpose bonds that voters approved in an August 2014 election.

The board accepted a bid from J.P. Morgan Securities, which offered a 2.32 percent interest rate.

Funds from the sale of the bonds, to be received in January, will pay for numerous improvements in schools across the district.

The bonds will be paid off by 2024.

